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PENTASYLLABIC ENDINGS IN THE LATIN HEXAMETER
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE VERSE OF
L U C R E T I U S .

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PENTASYLLABIC ENDINGS IN THE LATIN HEXAMETER
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The dactylic hexameter was not indigenous to the soil of Italy. The rude Latin farmers whose primal destiny was to rule the world and to establish on unshaken foundations the eternal principles of justice,¹ expressed the poetic feelings aroused within them when they marveled at the Fortuna Urbis enduring from generation to generation and from age to age, or the mysterious sentiments engendered in their breasts by the solemnities attending death and burial in that simple Saturnian verse which some of our English nursery-rhymes illustrate so well. Neither by an original bent of mind nor by the metrical form of their words were they likely at any time to have developed the thoroughly artistic hexameter verse; it was the accident of conquest that brought them into contact with this as with many another form of Greek art, nor were they any more scrupulous in appropriating this than in availing themselves of the rest. The fear of Cato expressed in the suggestive language of Livy, "eo plus horreο ne illas magis res nos capiant quam nos illas,"² was amply justified by the actual course of events. Feebly as the forces of enervated Greece succumbed to the massive legions of victorious Rome, they fell not more weakly than the unartistic fledgling of the Italian muse pined away before the glorious advent of the Epic hexameter of Hellas. The great Ennius, annalist and poet,

qui primus amoeno
detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam,³

1. Virgil. Aeneid VI, 852-4.
2. Livy XXX, 4.
3. Lucretius I, 117-8.

made the first experiments with the dactylic hexameter in Latin, and, uncouth though his results must seem in the light of later developments, so superior were they to anything in the existing native forms for every purpose save perhaps the *satura* in which the national metres long retained a place, that the question of superiority as between the two seems never to have been raised seriously again. From this time on the somewhat reluctant language was wrought into hexameter forms for purposes of didactic and epic poetry.

But while the Latin hexameter finds its prototype in the Greek, it would have been quite safe to predict at the time of the very first imitation that some divergence from the original working model would speedily become capable of detection in the Latin verse, primarily perhaps because of linguistic differences, but undoubtedly in the second place because the orderly genius of the Latin tongue could with difficulty tolerate the extraordinary and oft-recurring liberties of Greek hexameter poetry. The animating principle of Greek art was the dual law of freedom, liberty tempered by restraint, and it is no surprise therefore to find many violations of rigid rule under their dispensation when the end in view is the achievement thereby of a substantial gain to art. But the Latin genius is essentially the representation of law, which was as truly the ideal of the Roman mind as beauty was the goal of the Greek; and thus it is that the Latin hexameter, while far from lacking in beauty or in grace, is especially illustrative of obedience to formulated canons of art established from age to age in a progressive series. The guiding star of Latin poetry shown with a light far other than the glow which illuminates Hellenic verse, and it will not be doing any violence either to

the terms themselves or to the facts of the case if we place Greek and Roman art, however displayed, in a juxtaposition the parts of which we may name free and formal respectively.

From this love of form inherent in the Roman breast there arose a number of more or less sacred conventions regarding hexameter verse which find their best and most perfect exemplification in the work of the master-poets Virgil and Ovid: the result was that if the Latin hexameter lost in exuberance and freedom it gained in dignity to such an extent that it became "the statliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man."¹ One of these conventions, the one with which we are particularly concerned at present, relates to the form of the conclusion of the verse. It became a generally accepted law that pentasyllabic endings,—by which we are to understand endings containing within the limits of a single word a dactyl and a spondee (or a trochee) in the order given,²—while technically permissible were artistically inadmissible in the close of a Latin hexameter verse. Quintilian in his famous "Institutio" devoted largely to literary criticism stigmatizes it as "*praemolle*"³ and the context of that word leaves us in no doubt as to the meaning he intended to convey, while the fastidiousness of the masters is quite at one with Quintilian's dictum.

The pentasyllabic ending is of frequent occurrence in Homer and Aratus, the one standing at the beginning of all hexameter poetry, the latter a representative of the highly polished if somewhat inane literature of Alexandria under the Ptolemies so that Greek sensibili-

1. Tennyson: Address to Virgil.

2. Accordingly six-syllabled words as "mutabilitate" are included.

3. Quintilian: Inst. Or. IX, 4, 85.

ity does not appear to have been offended at any period ^{by} of this particular conclusion of the verse. It appears repeatedly in Ennius and Lucilius, but the former of these was an experimenter as we have already seen, while the latter was the notoriously careless artist who used to boast that he composed two hundred verses standing on one foot. In the 740 hexameters of Cicero, with whom a new school of hexameter writing may be said to have originated, we find but 4 such endings —, anguitenentes, Cassiepia (1), and Posteriorius ² — and that though he was in the main translating from the Greek of Aratus where such endings are common. Endings like exreditentem ¹ alitibusq;us are rare in the hexameter of Catullus who is to be ranked along with Cicero as a founder of the Augustan school. In Virgil and Ovid the pentasyllabic ending is a distinct rarity and generally consists, as might be expected, of a Greek proper name.

We have not made any mention of Lucretius in this enumeration of the various authors, for in this particular respect at least he seems to be the adherent of no school, while all the trend of the hexameter development of his time appears to have been away from the pentasyllabic ending, with him it is a commonplace. While, therefore, it cannot be doubted that Lucretius studied Cicero's hexameters and studied them to advantage, ² it is reasonably clear that he found no particular or specific objection to the use of the pentasyllabic ending: for it occurs ³ 305 times in his 7415 verses, a percentage

1. Trans. Am. Phil. Assoc'n, XXVIII, p. 65.

2. Munro's note to V. 691.

3. Following, as I have done throughout, Munro's text. (Edition 4 of 1886.)

or 4.1, or, to put it otherwise, an average occurrence of 2 such endings in every 49 lines. This may perhaps be accounted for on the grounds of a deliberate affectation of archaism, for that the hexameters of Lucretius are archaic may be proved by comparing them with the verses of Catullus, or better still with those ^{the} of Ciceronian lines, which were written in early youth and therefore probably under the influence of specific rules imparted in the schools of the day.¹

Even in Lucretius himself it is not impossible to detect a change in reference to the employment of these endings; there is a marked diminution in the frequency of their occurrence in the last three books as contrasted with the three that precede. The accompanying table will show at a glance the truth of this statement.

Table displaying the occurrence of Pentasyllabic endings in Lucretius.

| Book | No. of Lines | Occurrences | Percentage |
|--------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| I. | 1117 | 68 | 5.8 |
| II. | 1174 | 86 | 7.3 |
| III. | 1094 | 48 | 4.4 |
| IV | 1287 | 29 | 2.25 |
| V | 1457 | 42 | 2.9 |
| VI | 1286 | 34 | 2.6 |
| I - VI | 7415 | 305 | 4.1 |

It would hazardous however to infer from this statement that

1. Munro, Vol. II, p. 12 (Intro'n). The possibly archaic ring of the pentasyllabic ending is confirmed by the frequent occurrence of the ai ending as a Genitive Sing. of Decl. I, -- 47 times in all.

Lucretius had begun to experience any real distaste for the pentasyllabic ending; it points merely perhaps to a more cautious employment of that conclusion of the verse in the later books of the poem. While the vagaries into which statistics may lead one in the matter of drawing inferences are notorious, it is at least safe to draw attention to the interesting fact that the first and especially the second book pass high above the average established for the entire poem -- an average practically exhibited in book III -- while the last three books present a really great depression below the norm for the whole work.

In a mere enumeration of the instances where this ending is found in Lucretius there would be but little interest and practically no scientific value, but the ends of learning may be in some slight measure subserved by an attempt to investigate the probable reasons which may be held to account for the decline and practically the disappearance of this verse ending in Latin hexameter poetry, and to such an inquiry we propose now to devote ourselves for a little space, elucidating the argument wherever possible by illustrations drawn from the "De Rerum Natura."

(1) The pentasyllabic verse-ending obliterates the finer touches of the verse exhibited in diaesis and caesura.

The importance in hexameter poetry of the element of diaesis and caesura is a fact grown stale by constant reiteration, nor is it anything more than a matter of common observation that it is in the treatment of diaesis and caesura that the power of the skilful poet is displayed, inasmuch as upon these two things there depends directly the distribution of the constituent masses of the verse, involving of course the entire rhythmic movement of the line. The

effect undoubtedly produced by diaeresis and caesura seems to arise from the addition of a little something to the duration of the syllable immediately preceding their occurrence; in this way variety is created in the otherwise somewhat monotonous procession of exact long and short quantities by the introduction of a certain number of what we might designate irrational long and irrational short syllables.

But whatever the exact nature of the artistic result secured by the use of caesura and diaeresis, and whatever the method of producing the intended effect in actual delivery, it is sufficiently clear from the painstaking investigations of the great metricians that a vital importance attached to their proper use in the hexameter verse. If then the diaeresis and the caesura were all-essential features of the hexameter, what is more natural or what more to be expected than that they should appear especially in that part of the verse universally conceded to have been most carefully elaborated by the master-poets? Their almost invariable appearance was, as a matter of fact, sufficiently secured by the convention which established the style of verse-ending under two forms, that involving diaeresis because of a coincidence in the word-ending and the ending of the fifth foot ($\sim\sim\mid\sim\sim$), and that involving a caesura (generally a minor one) because of the termination of the word within the fifth foot ($\sim\sim\mid\sim\sim$). Here then is one reason for the gradual disuse of the pentasyllabic ending to the hexameter verse.

The pentasyllabic ending would deprive what is acknowledged to be the most artistic part of the line of one of the most artistic devices of hexameter poetry.

1. Cf. L. Mueller De Re Metrica², p. 242 (ed. of 1894): Et videtur quidem ab elegantia alienum quod contractis in unum verbum pedibus non satis servatur utriusque peculiaris libertas ac proprietas.

Or we might otherwise express the same position in these words: By any diminution in the suppleness of that part of the verse which should be most highly polished, the graceful qualities of the whole are seriously impaired.

The line with the pentasyllabic ending reminds one of a moulding consisting of several successive patterns, where the dividing wall between the two last patterns has been broken down, and the molten metal instead of turning out a perfect frieze of iron produces a screen with the design blurred and obscured at one end, and contrasting but ill with the successful remainder. The more graceful the introduction of the verse, the more serious the contrast afforded by an inartistic conclusion; but if a line is already weak, metrically speaking, when it reaches a pentasyllabic ending, it is irredeemable.

But, it will be urged, if this be true of the pentasyllable, does it not hold equally of the spondaic tetrasyllable which so often concludes a Virgilian hexameter,¹ and not infrequently occurs in Lucretius? The same principle, it may be answered, would undoubtedly hold good if we were any longer dealing with the perfect Roman verse, but, as a matter of fact, we pass with such tetrasyllabic endings from the genuine Latin hexameter to an imitation of the Alexandrian poets, and are really dealing with a metrical Graecism expressed in the Latin tongue. This then is a case where two artistic ends conflict, and the tetrasyllable gains the ascendancy occasionally, possibly for the sake of variety and almost certainly for the sake of literary reminiscence; and the objection to the pentasyllabic ending on this first ground remains unimpaired.—

(ii) The Pentasyllabic Ending injures the internal ratio of the different parts of the verse.

1. 23 times in all. Cf. Lukrezstudien von X. Paulus, I, p. 11.

The second reason urged against the pentasyllabic ending overlaps the first to some extent, inasmuch as any injury done to the internal ration^c of the verse means a disarrangement of the diaersis and caesuras within that verse to an equivalent extent. But while in consideration of the first argument we were particularly concerned with the absence of diaersis and caesura in the concluding two feet of the line, we now pass on the other hand to an investigation of the manner in which the pentasyllabic ending affects the pauses in the remainder of the line.

The total number of morae in an hexameter verse reckoning the short mora (j) as the unit, is twenty-four, and whenever in such a verse a pentasyllabic ending occurs, eight morae, or one-thir^e of the entire verse, are comprised within a single word. The result is that sixteen morae, which must occur in twelve syllables at the most, are all that is left to be distributed among whatever words are to constitute the other portion of the line. Looking at the matter in the most casual fashion one might justifiably anticipate the development of two extreme cases as an effect of this state of affairs:

(a) The remaining twelve syllables or sixteen morae will go into two or three large words with the result that the internal divisions of the verse will be correspondingly reduced to two or three, and its gracefulness impaired proportionally as its quality of lith^e movements at the joints (*iuncturae*) is diminished.

II 872 Dissimili perfecta figura principiorum.

(b) The remaining sixteen morae will break up into a number of mono-syllabic and dissyllabic words affording a ridiculous contrast with the overwhelming size of the conclusion. The pentasyllabic ending will have a quantitative value just twice that which can possibly attach to any dissyllabic word.

V 192 Nil tamen est ad nos qui comptu coniugioque.

These then are the dangers which lie on the surface. We have in the first instance a line in which the internal divisions are all

too few, and secondly a line in which they are so numerous that the verse almost falls to pieces, particularly when forced to carry an ending out of all proportion to its strength. There are 28 lines falling under the first type, that is to say, 28 lines in which the entire verse is composed of the pentasyllabic ending preceded by three large words. Under the second head are included 37 lines; in no one of these does any word bear a higher ratio to the ending than 2:5 in point of syllables and 4:8 in quantitative value. It may be added that in all these thirty-seven lines the number of words composing the first four feet ranges from five to seven, involving a corresponding number of internal divisions; in such hexameters not only does the entire line fall apart but we have an extremely unpleasant contrast at once instituted between the conclusion of the verse standing in solid bulk without any incision and its antecedent portion with an intolerable number of internal divisions.

But another very common case which might not instantaneously suggest itself is the interesting instance where the first four feet of the "pentasyllabic" verse are composed of a single large word round which are grouped several smaller words. For convenience of notation let us call P our pentasyllabic ending, X our larger word (a tetrasyllable for instance) and v w y z our small words (monosyllabic or dissyllabic); possible arrangements are as follows:

I. X Y Z Y X P.

This is open to serious objection. The interior of the verse contrasts but ill in point of strength with both ends, for they comprise 14 morae (assuming that our first word is a tetrasyllable)

within two words, while the interior comprises but 10 morae in 3 or 4 words, the average proportion of externals to internals being 7:3 or 7:2-1/2, a relation which makes against symmetry in the line. Such a line, moreover, brings about an inevitable contrast of v and $\frac{v}{P}$, P being a ratio of perhaps 2/8 or 3/8 in morae and certainly not more than 4/8.

This type of verse in which the line opens with a tetrasyllable, concludes with a pentasyllable, and has its interior constructed of monosyllabic or dissyllabic words, occurs 20 times in Lucretius.

III. VWYZXP.

This is an extremely objectionable line displaying an almost entire lack of balance. In the first place we have in the first part of the verse three or four words containing 10 morae, or on an average of 3 or 2-1/2 morae a word, while the last section of the line presents two words averaging 7 morae each, so that the verse is entirely too heavy in its conclusion. The heaviness of verse-gloss created by the pentasyllabic ending is largely intensified, almost duplicated; one might say, by the occurrence immediately before it of another word almost equally bulky. Nor should we omit to mention that four diaereses or caesuras are found within the first ten morae as against one in the concluding fourteen.

There are 47 verses in Lucretius of exactly this nature; in each of these we have the line opened by a succession of three or four monosyllabic or dissyllabic words, and concluded by a tetrasyllable followed by a pentasyllable.

III. VWYZXP

The fault of such a line is that it virtually repeats whatever de-

fect there is inherent in the long ending; it simply duplicates an existing disproportion and carries it into each half of the verse.

II 1002 *Nec sic intermit mors res ut materiali.*

There are 22 verses in the "De Rerum Natura" of exactly this type.

But, it will be asked, is there an, inherent necessity that the existence of a pentasyllabic ending should force the appearance of a tetrasyllable earlier in the verse? By no means; our position is simply this. The use of a pentasyllable in conclusion does to a certain extent impel the writer to avoid composing the antecedent part of the line from small words, and the danger thus arises either of constituting it of perhaps three large words, or of employing in it a single word proportionate enough to the pentasyllabic ending but utterly disproportionate to the other factors of the verse.

It is practically impossible to analyze the remaining pentasyllabic verses properly or profitably: many of them which present no other defect are weak in the juxtaposition which they afford of a short word (especially a monosyllable) in the fourth foot with the ponderous conclusion. Nor would it be within the bounds of truth to assert that all pentasyllabic lines are to be rejected under this second reason, but enough evidence has been accumulated to give some weight to our proposition which may now with advantage be summarily restated:

The pentasyllabic ending, occupying an entire third of the verse, creates the following difficulties in the remainder of the line which in turn react upon the verse pauses:

- (1) That remainder may engage its limited space with large words reducing the internal divisions of the verse to an unpleasant minimum.
- (2) It may on the other hand be composed of a number of monosyllabic or dissyllabic words, the ratio of which to the ending is un-

favorable to a balanced verse.

(iii) Or again a remainder, variously mixed, may occur, dangerously liable from many points of view to artistic error.

(iii) The character of the pentasyllabic ending is such that the sixth foot is generally a mere inflection.

It is generally conceded, as we have had occasion to observe before, that no place in the hexameter verse was more carefully elaborated than the last two feet of the line. Just as the antiphonal poetry of the Hebrews is quite irregular save in the syllables immediately preceding verse-pauses, just as the chants we employ today in the ceremonials of some of the churches display a like freedom until we reach the concluding notes of the line, so in the Latin hexameter there is no definite attempt to establish a correspondence of word-and-verse-accent in the first four feet, -- nay more, it might even be said that a divergence of accent is courted there, the better to emphasize the exact correspondence characterizing the fifth and sixth feet. In these different species of poetry then the same theory prevails; it is in those syllables immediately preceding the pause marking the end of the verse that harmony of accent and general polish is demanded. If this be true of the metrical side of the hexameter, it is not assuming too much to say that the part of the verse most highly elaborated from the purely mechanical standpoint should also be strong in point of content, for just as content without form is displeasing to the cultured mind, so also is form with-

1. This is no imaginary difficulty. With such a large portion of the verse pre-engaged, so to speak, it is no light task to arrange the preceding part so that its elements be not so large as to make the line ponderous nor so small as to destroy its balance, --

Incidit in Scyllam qui vult Týtare Charybdis.

out content highly inartistic. Beauty and content should then mark the hexameter close.

But there is no beauty in an inflectional ending. Sonorous as the different inflectional forms may sound to our ears, it is not probable that in a highly synthetic language they were so reckoned. They were too much the clay of common speech, or to put it otherwise too much the mere coupling-pins holding language together to be reckoned in any sense beautiful. The classical languages afford abundant opportunities for rhyming, but any propensity to such kind of verse was checked by an intuitive perception that the rhyme would depend upon inflectional endings in the main.

Nor did they convey any meaning in particular beyond a certain variation in relation of the stem to which they were attached. A Roman hearing the word "principorum" derived his main idea from principi and his complementary definition of it from orum, the crum bearing but small relative significance to the principi.

From all this it may be gathered that a foot composed entirely of an inflectional ending would have very little beauty and, relatively speaking, a very limited content. While this might be tolerated elsewhere in the verse, it is in poor taste to place it in the conclusion where the perfection of art is supposed to be displayed. The concluding foot should exhibit weight of dignity and not weight of inflectional ^{we}vocal sounds. But it is the question of content which is particularly damning. If the last two feet are highly important -- and it is conceded that they are -- in them should be placed the best and most independent thoughts of the verse, thoughts, so to speak, of the first rank and magnitude. Now what-

over the nature of the thought expressed by an inflectional ending, it may truly be said of it that its rank is secondary, being expressive only of the pure relational as opposed to the purely notional. The relative value of an inflectional sixth foot and of an independent sixth may be gauged by comparing "principiorum" with "sidera somnos." The inflectional sixth foot is, then, generally speaking shallow in content, and has no more beauty than the most homely utensil of the kitchen among the drawing-room ornaments.

But, it may be asked, is the inflectional sixth foot an essential characteristic of the pentasyllabic ending? Answering on the basis of a study of the Lucretian pentasyllables, one may in all conscience reply in the affirmative: practically in every case the eighth foot is an inflectional ending, pure and simple, though some of the nouns have their sixth foot made up of a part of the stem plus the case-ending. A number of the endings, too, exhibit a sixth foot composed of some nominal or verbal inflection plus the Conjunction -QUE; but of course with these the base is in no wise altered, as the enclitic is, equally with any inflectional syllable, open to the charge of being "præmolle." The following tables will show the nature and number of the inflectional sixth foot.

A. Verbs.

| I. Finite Verbs. | | | | | | | Total |
|------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------|---------|
| 1st Singular | amQVE 1) | | | | | | 1 |
| 2d Singular | aris, are | | | | | | 8 |
| 3d Singular | atQVE) 5 itQVE) 5 | atuf 9) etur 8) | 17 | abat 3 | vxit 3 | arit 2 | isset 1 |
| 1st plural | amus 4) murus 1) | amur 1 | | | | | 8 |
| 3d plural | antur 15) entur 10) 37 untur 12) | arent 1) arint 1) Qssent 1) | 3 | ant- QVE 6) -fi- unt 7 | ar- unt 3 -ers 2 e- unt 5 | bant 2 | 54 |
| II. Infinitives. | | | | | | | |
| All Kinds | are 5 | ari 8) iri 1) | 7 | iQVE 1) | isse 3 | | 16 |
| III. Gerunds and Gerundives. | | | | | | | |
| All Kinds | andum 3) 4 endum 1) | anda 2) and 1) | 5 | undo 3 | | | 12 |
| IV. Participles. | | | | | | | |
| Present Act. | ansQVE 1) antes 3) 4 | ensQVE 2) entes 6) | 8 | enti 2 | - | | 14 |
| Perfect Pass. pts.) 10 | atus (& pts.) 10 | itus (& pts.) 4 | us- QVE 1) is- QVE 1) | -fina- ta 1 | | | 17 |
| Grand Total | | | | | | | 157 |

Of the entire 157 verbal pentasyllabic endings only 2 show any significant and independent idea in the sixth foot, conlabefiunt, conlabe-
facta, and even here the parts of fig have become so closely allied with the main meaning of the word as to lose most of their pristine significance and independence.

Mention has just been made of the fact that in place of a solid

dissyllabic verb-ending we often find a monosyllabic plus the enclitic -QVE. Reference to the table above will show that there are 18 verses with -QVE added, including representatives from three of the Verb-classes mentioned above.

Let us present the remaining statistics bearing on this point.

B. Nouns and Adjectives.

Out of this 141, 20 are combinations of inflections with QVE.

C. Adverbs.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---------|---------|--|---|
| ate 1 atim 2 | enter 2 | enter 1 | | 8 |
|-----------------|---------|---------|--|---|

D. Conjunctions.

2QVE 1

There could be perhaps no more cogent reason against the pentasyllabic ending from an artistic standpoint than a statistical presentation such as we have just given; and it is, of course, violation of mesthetic law which must especiall, weigh with us in considering such a matter as verse and verse-rhythm. Lucian Müller has expressed the objection under this head in vigorous Latin which will stand quotations—"At verba pentasyllaba Latina ...
... exiguo ut pluri ~~num~~ constant ponderis sententiae, ut quae sint vel simplicia derivationum vel flexionum vastitate onerosa et composita, quorum pars posterior per derivationes vel flexiones mollior."

(iv) A large percentage of pentasyllabic endings have an initial syllable as weak as their conclusion.

The syllable of the fifth foot which receives the verse-iectus is naturally an important place in the hexameter, marking as it does our entry into the more rigidly perfected portion of the line. When, therefore, such a syllable is a mere preposition in composition the effect is weak and disappointing, especially in view of the fact that the poets preferred as a rule simple forms of words as against those compounded with prepositions.² An examination of the 305 pentasyllabic endings in Lucretius reveals the following prepositions in composition holding the stressed position in the fifth foot.

ai(am) 16 times ab (of) 2 times.

con(co, 43 times per 7 times.
com)

de 4 times prae 8 times.

dis(dif) 18 times pro 3 times.

1. L. Müller: De Re Metrica IV, pp. 242-3.

2. L. Müller: De Re Metrica, p. 243.

| | | | |
|----------------|----------|------------------|--------------------|
| <u>g (ex)</u> | 22 times | <u>sub (sup)</u> | 10 times. |
| <u>in (im)</u> | 35 times | <u>trans</u> | 3 times. |
| <u>inter</u> | 1 time. | | <u>171 in all.</u> |

It appears that considerably more than 50% of the pentasyllabic endings in Lucretius are open not only to the objection offered under our third argument but also to the additional objection now proposed. As a matter of fact in these 171 cases, the parts of the word receiving the special verse-stress (e.g. principiōrum) are its relative and not its essential elements.

(v) The pentasyllabic ending involves a rhythm essentially foreign to the nature of the concluding two feet in a Latin hexameter.

It may be predicated of the Latin dactylic hexameter in general that it is a falling or descending measure. It is a falling measure because the voice, which is at its highest and fullest tone when resting on the stressed syllable introducing the dactyl, gradually descends from that musical elevation through two notes to the conclusion of the foot. The typical dactylic hexameter in its original form would be one where every foot, excepting the terminal sixth, should exhibit a regular descending rhythm,— an effect only to be secured ^{only} by having words and feet coincide throughout. Now the effect of a system so painfully regular, not to mention the danger of the many diaereses it would introduce, could not be anything else but an impression of extreme monotony without relief; and so the theoretically perfect descending rhythm of the hexameter, assuming that such a thing ever existed, was soon forced to give away to a rhythm exhibiting in its first four feet a large amount of variation from a falling measure in the strict sense of the term.

The most casual inspection of the first four feet of any system of dactylic hexameters in Latin will reveal the following sug-

gentive varieties of dactylic feet:



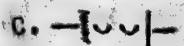
In this case the dactyl is contained exactly within a word, as for instance in Virgil's Aeneid I, 3.

Litora: multum ille et terris iactatus et alto.

Here can be no doubt of the existence of a falling rhythm; the verse accent and the word accent coincide and the rhythm descends gently from that point of coincidence to the end of the foot.



Here our first word terminates with the foot, being either a dissyllable of trochaic form or a longer word commencing in a previous foot and sending over this remainder to the foot before us. The remaining short syllable may be some monosyllabic word; in that event its intonation, musically speaking, would probably be on a level with the short syllable of the trochee preceding, and the descending nature of the dactyl not materially impaired. But, as is oftener the case, this short syllable may be a part of a word running over into the next foot; under these circumstances we must note partial detriment to the descending rhythm of the dactyl by the appearance within the verse of an iambic element, distinctly ascending in its nature. While our trochee conforms to descending conditions, the succeeding iamb introduces a partial element of ascending rhythm.



In this case we have a long monosyllable, followed by a word composed of two shorts and a long, as e. g. *tex humeros*. Here there is no question of the existence of a decidedly anapaestic rhythm ascending from *hum* to *os*.

1. The simple straight line will denote the conclusion of a foot, the zig-zag the conclusion of a word.

These typical cases serve to illustrate the truth that while the dactylic hexameter is in origin a descending rhythm and is practically such in large part in use, it may contain within itself ascending elements in the shape of iambs and anapaests.

But it must be observed — and that with care, because here is the crux of the argument -- that in the great masters of Latin poetry, Virgil and Ovid, while iambic and anapaestic rhythms are to be tolerated in the first four feet of the hexameter where freedom is the prevailing condition, in the concluding feet one of these licenses is rigidly excluded though the other is suffered to remain. The iambic rise is permitted in the last two feet of the verse, but not the anapaestic. That one of these should be suffered to appear thus is not at all irrational: the monotony of a verse-system continually ending in a dactyl plus a spondee (or trochee), arranged in such a manner that the close of the dactyl should always be coincident with the conclusion of a word, would be simply intolerable, and as a consequence it is not only artistic but almost an absolute necessity that we should have some variant to replace the other type at times. But if any section of the verse is highly polished and elaborated, as we have remarked several times already, it is true in an especial degree that the concluding two feet of the hexameter are representative of the highest canons of this form of meter. It follows therefore that if the descending character of the rhythm is to be preserved in any part of the line, it should be particularly guarded in that section where the most painstaking art is practiced. The consequence is that we find the most pronounced type of rising rhythm entirely excluded from the verse-ends of the works of the master-poets, while the lesser type is tolerated for

the sake of a needful variation; the iambus may occur in the conclusion of the hexameter but not the anapaest.

A very interesting corroboration of this fact may be obtained by comparing the tetrasyllabic endings of the Lucretian hexameter with those of Virgil. Lucretius has many endings such as est elementis, in brevitate, where the tetrasyllables furnishing an anapaestic rhythm (—U—U) are pure Latin words, but the tetrasyllabic ending is a rarity in Virgil, and is almost invariably a Greek word, as for example in clarosque hymenaeos or seco que elephante.¹ The legitimate deduction from these indisputable facts is that in the perfection of the Latin hexameter it was felt that the anapaestic rhythm which tetrasyllables of the type above mentioned involved, while perfectly permissible in the Greek hexameter, where indeed it is of frequent occurrence, was foreign to the spirit of the verse as developed by the Romans, and was consequently excluded from employment in the case of genuine Latin words.

We may now presume without further elaboration on this point, that in the perfection of the Latin hexameter the anapaestic rhythm in the close of the verse was distinctly distasteful except in such places as a deliberate return to the Greek rhythm was sought either for purposes of variety or as a delicate souvenir to the Roman litterateur of the hexameters of Greece. It remains to elucidate the connection existing between this distaste for anapaestic rhythms and the avoidance of the pentasyllabic conclusion in the most perfected form of the hexameter.

1. In a passage such as Aen. IV, 215 "cum semiviro comitatu"² a particular effect is sought by the peculiar metre. It is effeminate as the crew whom Iarbas is there describing.

It may be confidently asserted that an important principle underlying all pronunciation is the attainment of the greatest ease consistent with accuracy. A conservation of energy is aimed at, and so for instance in the case of an anapaestic word the voice does not preserve a dead level in the two short syllables beginning the word, but rather there is a distinct rise in the second of these as a preliminary to laying full stress upon the long syllable which receives the metrical iotus. If then we draw three parallel lines representing three grades or levels of voice we may fairly indicate an anapest in this manner:



And we may affirm it as a general law arising from the principle of ease in pronunciation that if we have a word of such a form that a long stressed syllable is preceded by two short unstressed syllables, there will be a gradual elevation of the voice toward this accented syllable rather than a violent ascent to it from the unaccented syllable immediately preceding.

This eminently reasonable principle is called directly into use when we come to deal with such a word as materiæ or principiorum. According to the principles of Latin accentuation, the main accent of such a word as principiorum falls upon the g long of the penultimate syllable. What then will be the vocal tendency in dealing with the syllables immediately preceding the accented syllable? There will not be a descending rhythm from the initial prig., but just as in the case of a tetrasyllabic word of the third paeanic (— — —) movement, so here also the voice will be gradually elevated through the

two short unstressed syllables till the long accented syllable is attained, producing in so doing an effect indubitably anapaestic in the close of the hexameter verse. But we have already seen the prejudice existing in Latin verse against tolerating such rhythms save under Greek auspices, and the rigour which damned the third paeonic close to the hexameter because of its markedly anapaestic nature, must invariably sit in judgment upon the pentasyllabic ending of the adonic form and pass like sentence on it.—

(vi) The pentasyllabic ending involves an inequality of verse ictus between the fifth and sixth feet.

After the preceding discussion regarding the nature of the word-accent in *principium* and similar words, it is sufficiently clear that there is in such words a double accent, but that of these one is principal and the other subordinate. According to the accepted theory of Latin accentuation, the penultimate syllable will in all adonic words receive the main stress; unavoidably then the nature of the stress falling upon the first syllable of these adonics is secondary relative to the sixth ictus of the verse. The consequence is that a disparity of weight is established between the fifth and sixth ¹thesis, materially damaging the conclusion of the verse. It may be added furthermore that were this disparity exactly reversed, the effect would not be so serious; but the fifth thesis is of all theses in the verse the most important, and there is a decided defect in art evinced if it be reduced below the level of a principal accent while at the same time the relatively less important sixth receives the full stress.

It may be objected that in the first four feet of the line the

1. Using the term in its original Greek sense.

verse ictus falls upon syllables of a naturally weak accent or of no accent at all, but far from damaging our argument, this objection rather strengthens it, because while in the first four feet coincidence of word- and verse-accent is a matter of choice or chance, in the last two feet it is practically a rigid law that two principal word accents should be coincident with the two metrical ictuses falling within those feet. One can hardly therefore justify a weak word-accent in the fifth thesis by an appeal to the construction of the remainder of the verse.

Whatever the degree in which these various reasons affected the pentasyllabic ending, whatever one of these different artistic defects weighed most strongly against it, or whether their combined force was irresistible, it is a matter of common observation that the pentasyllabic ending practically passed from Latin poetry with Lucretius, its last great exponent. The new school of the Augustans rejected it almost entirely, and their extremely infrequent employment of it cannot be used to argue that they regarded it as a legitimate ending: the exact reverse indeed would be the fairer inference. The probable truth of the case is that the pentasyllabic ending, like other licenses of Greek verse, fell for a variety of reasons, some of which we have endeavored to present in this essay, under the ban of the Roman genius for order and regularity and thus ultimately became obsolete. It is perhaps but another instance of the extent to which the critical principle may be carried by a people upon whom the exuberant impulse of an original system of art never truly dawned.

William Hardy Alexander.

Univ. of California,
March 27th, 1900.

Appendix giving an alphabetical list of the pentasyllabic endings
in Lucretius with the places of their occurrence.

A

| | I | II | III | IV | V | VI |
|--------------|----------|--------------------|-----|-----|------|------|
| Accipiamus | | | | | | 186 |
| Accipientque | 818, 810 | 702, 885 1,1009 | | | | |
| Accumulabat | | | | | | 1263 |
| Accumulantes | | | 71 | | | |
| Adcelerare | | | | | | 772 |
| Admoderate | | 189 | | | | |
| Adpositusque | | | | | | 1038 |
| Adsimulata | | 980 | | | | 189 |
| Adsimulentur | | 814 | | | | |
| Adtenuari | 317 | | | | | |
| Adgreuantur* | | | | 187 | | |
| Aedituentes | | | | | | 1275 |
| Aegocerotis | | | | 818 | 615 | |
| Agricolarum | | 1181 | | | | 1280 |
| Ambitionis | | | | | 1132 | |
| Amicitias | | | 83 | | | |
| Articulatio | | | | 553 | | |
| Articulisque | | | 697 | | | |
| Asperitate | | | | 542 | | |
| Auctificique | | 571 | | | | |
| Auricularum | | | | 584 | | |
| Auxiliatum | | | | | 1040 | |
| Commedibatur | | | | | | 113 |
| commemorando | 400 | | | | | |

* Should follow adcelerare.

© Hexasyllable.

C

| | I | II | III | IV | V | VI |
|---------------|-------------------|------------------|-----|------|------|------|
| composituras | | | | 328 | | |
| conciliandi | | 551 | | | | |
| conciliari | | | 865 | | | 889 |
| conciliata | 811, 1043 | | | | | |
| conciliatu | 575 | 100, 134 936. | | | | |
| concilioque | | 820 | | | | |
| concrucinamur | | | 148 | | | |
| conficiuntur | 535 | | | | | |
| confiteare | | 868, 1074 | | | 376 | |
| conglomerari | | 210 | 210 | | | |
| coniugieque | | 845 | 845 | | | |
| conlabefacta | | | | 697 | | |
| conlabefunt | | | 585 | | | |
| conqueretur | | | 613 | | | |
| consiliumque | | | 815 | | 127 | |
| constabilitas | | 42 | | | | |
| constituantur | 968 | | | | | |
| contineantur | 818, 809, 1035 | 761, 1008 | | | | |
| continuato | | 531 | | | | |
| contuseare | | | | | 653 | |
| conveniebant | | | | 638 | | |
| convenientes | 1030 | 713 | | | 442 | |
| convenienti | | 741 | 781 | | | |
| conveniundo | | | | | | 480 |
| cooperuisse | | | | | 342 | |
| corripuitque | | | | 1210 | | |
| deripiebant | | | | | 1320 | 1320 |
| desererentur | | | | | | 1286 |
| desidiasque | | | | | | 48 |
| deteriores | | 508 | | | | |
| deveniamus | | | | | | 1133 |

| | I | II | III | IV | V | VI |
|-----------------|------|-----|-----|------|------|-----|
| differitasque | | | | 638 | | |
| discrepitansque | | | 803 | | | |
| discicetur | | | 639 | | | |
| dispiciantur | | | 26 | | | |
| dispiciendum | | | | | | 648 |
| disposituras | 1037 | | | | 192 | |
| dissiluere | 391 | | | | | |
| dissimilisque | | | | | | 775 |
| dissoluantur | 519 | | 360 | | | |
| dissoluatque | 223 | | | | | |
| dissoluensque | 558 | | | | | |
| dissoluique | | | | | 380 | |
| dissoluitque | | | | | | 448 |
| dissoluuntur | 784 | | 706 | | | |
| distribuisse | | | | | 1041 | |
| divitiaeque | 455 | | | | | |
| divitiasque | | | 70 | | | |
| <i>E</i> | | | | | | |
| emineatque | | | 284 | | | |
| emolumenti | | | | | 188 | |
| excruciatbat | | | | | 1428 | |
| excrucientur | | | | 1202 | | |
| exiguusque | 434 | | | | | |
| exiliantque | | 200 | | | | |
| exitiales | | 589 | | | | |
| exorerentur | 180 | | | | | |
| exoreretur | | 507 | | | | |
| exoriantur | | | | | 1172 | |
| exorientar | | 792 | | | | |
| exriuntur | 869 | | | | | |
| exsiliamus | 488 | | | | | |

648

775

448

| | I | II | III | IV | V | VI |
|---|---------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | | 183 | | | | |
| | | 441 | | | | |
| | 1028 | | | | 428 | |
| | | | | | 332 | |
| | 811 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | 1877 |
| | | | | | 384 | |
| | | 234 | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| F | frugiferentis | 3 | | | | |
| G | Geryonai | | | | 28 | |
| | Gramigenarum | 477 | | | | |
| H | harmoniai | | | 131 | | |
| | homosomerian [#] | 830, 834 | | | | |
| I | immoderatum | 1013 | | | | |
| | impeditur | | 348 | | | |
| | imperiarunt | | | 1028 | | |
| | incubuisse | | | | 346 | |
| | indupediri | | | | 70 | |
| | indupedita | 240 | 459 | | | 453 |
| | inferiores | 734 | | | | |
| | infittiandum | | | 796 | | 140 |
| | ingenioque | | | 745 | | 1111 |
| | inliciaris | | | | 1145 | |
| | innumerali | | 1086 | | | |
| | insinuando | | | | 331 | |
| | insinuandum | | | | | 44 |
| | insinuari | | | 722 | | |
| | insinuarit | | | 485 | | 73 |

Hexasyllable.

| | I | II | III | IV | V | VI |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---|-------------|------|-------------------|---------|
| insinuatdm | | | 998 | | | |
| insinuatas | | | 661 | | | |
| insinuatur | | 684 | 671 | 1030 | | 802,956 |
| insinuatus | | | | | | 1032 |
| insinuentur | | | 729,738 | | | |
| insinuetur | 113 | | 780,792 | | | |
| instituisse | | | | | 15 | |
| interiere | | | 937 | | | |
| Inveniamque | | | 944 | | | |
| invenientes | 736 | | | | | |
| <hr/> | | | | | | |
| Ludificetur | 939 | | | 14 | | |
| <hr/> | | | | | | |
| Materiæ | 249,516 552,585 | 64,89,42,142 167,166,281 | | | 87,354 407,418 | |
| | 916,951 990,1001 | 293,304,527 329,544,562,647 | 193,855,928 | | | |
| | 1017,1035 1051,1113 | 735,732,89,936 1003,1019,1067, 1065 | | | | |
| Maximitate | | 498 | | | | |
| Militiai | 29 | | | | | |
| Mobilibusque | | | | | | 226 |
| Mobilitantur | | | 248 | | | |
| Mobilitate | | 161 | 428 | | | |
| Mobilitatem | | | | | | 347 |
| Mutabilitate [#] | | 932 | | | | |
| <hr/> | | | | | | |
| Nobilitate | | 11 | | | | |
| Nominatamus | | | 352 | | | |
| Nominatamia(st) | | | | 50 | | 374 |
| Nominatarunt | | | | | | 424 |
| Notitiai | | 124 | | | | |

#Hexasyllable.

| | | I | II | III | IV | V | VI |
|-------|-------------------|-------------|---|---------|---------|----------|----------|
| O | Officiatque | 877 | | | | | |
| | en Officiisque | | | | | 718 | |
| 2,856 | Omniparentis | | 708 | | | | |
| 1032 | Omnituentes | | 342 | | | | |
| P | participentur | | | 688 | | | |
| | particulatim | | | 542 | | | |
| | pennipotentum | | 878 | | | 789 | |
| | perfugiumque | | | | | 1109 | |
| | permixtali | 451 | | | | | |
| | perpetiuntur | | 1141 | | | | 398 |
| | perspiciantur | | | | 258 | | |
| | pertolerassent | | | | | 316 | |
| | pervolitantes | | 145,348 | | | | |
| | pestiliciasque | | | | | | 1098,125 |
| 226 | possideantur | 390 | | | | | |
| | praecipitanter | | 1063 | 1063 | | | |
| | praecipitavit | 251 | | | | 628 | |
| | praemetuenter | | | | | 824 | |
| | praepediuntur | | | 384,478 | | | |
| | praepropteranter | | | 779 | | | |
| 347 | principiorum | 371,414,996 | 785,292,297,373 877,527,671,312 816,927,929 | 262 | 677,843 | 184 | |
| | precubuere | 291 | | | | | |
| | progradientes | | | | | 533,1453 | |
| | propoteraque | | | | | | 157 |
| | purpureai | | 53 | | | | |
| R | religione | 63 | | | | | |
| 374 | religionem | | | 54 | | | |
| 424 | religiones | | 44 | | | 88 | 82 |
| | reliquiarum | 1108 | | | | | |
| S | sanguinolenti | | 631 | | | | |

| | I | II | III | IV | V | VI |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|------|-----|---------|------|------|
| <i>n</i> <i>sehsimarinis</i> | | | | | 892 | |
| <i>seminalique</i> | | | 746 | | | |
| <i>semiorum</i> | | | | 1005 | | |
| <i>significarent</i> | | | | | 1322 | |
| <i>simplicitate</i> | 338,371 309,812 | 157 | | | | |
| <i>solstitiales</i> | | | | | 617 | |
| <i>suaviloquenti</i> | 945 | | | 20 | | |
| <i>suppeditantur</i> | 1000 | 568 | | | | |
| <i>suppeditare</i> | 1040 | 1138 | | 776 | | 666 |
| <i>suppeditati</i> | | 1182 | | | | |
| <i>suppeditentur</i> | | 26 | | | | 1066 |
| <i>suppositisque</i> | | | | | | 543 |
| <i>T</i> | | | | | | |
| <i>terrigenarum</i> | | | | | 1411 | |
| <i>transpiciuntur</i> | | | | 271,278 | | |
| <i>U</i> | | | | | | |
| <i>Unguiculosque</i> | | | | | | 847 |
| <i>utilitatem</i> | | | | 25 | | |
| <i>utilitatis</i> | | | | 854 | | |
| <i>V</i> | | | | | | |
| <i>Vociferantur</i> | | 450 | | | | |
| <i>vociferari</i> | | | 14 | | | |